

No 56

Hatching the Lucky Egg

Humorous play for
2 male and 2 female characters

by

E. J. FREUND

No plays exchanged

Antigo Publishing Company
Antigo, Wis.

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Cast:

Sam, a portly, not very bright farmer
Gertie, his wife, fleshy and superstitious
John, farm hand, brave and bright
Gypsy girl, dresse dlike a Gypsy, full of
pep, foxy

Scene:

Family room of a farm house, untidy, with
hay or straw stalks on floor

Accessories:

Porcelain nestegg, other eggs, a course
stick, a stocking filled with coins to resemble
money, table with drawer, old book, switch
of willows, or similar wood, handbag

Entrance right and left

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Hatching the Lucky Egg

Gypsy (sneaks in, putting eggs into bag). I found these in the hen's coop alright enough—a whole nest full, and took all, the nestegg in addition.... Our band will have a nice mess of scrambled eggs, I'm sure. Now I'd like to know where he keeps his moneybag (advances towards table, when John enters, she turns completely about, looking innocent).

John (enters with stick in hand, aside). What the dickens is she doing in here? Looks to me like a Gypsy hag. Likely trying to hook things (loud.) Hey, hussey! Are you looking for the boss?

Gypsy (playing charming innocence). Hello, Charley, or John, or Jack, whatever you like.... I was just trying to ask somebody if I am right here.

John. No, you are not right here, you're wrong, entirely out of your proper place. How did you get in here?

Gypsy (light-heartedly). I walked in.

John. Walked in, eh? A most sensible thing to do when nobody is around (steps closer). What have you got in that bag?

Gypsy (turning away, holding bag aloft). A secret of mine, a real secret. You must not look in the bag or you'll spoil everything. I'll tell you later (pushes him away). I am as honest as a spring chicken.

Johu. Ah, I understand, a spring chicken scratching in the neighbors garden. You look it, too. Show me what you have in that bag, or I'll make things hiss here.

Gypsy. Take me for a jackdaw, eh? (takes porcelain nestegg from bag.) This here is no common egg like hens are laying. No hen ever laid this one, mark you. It is (talks in low voice.) I must not say it loud for it might spoil the charm—it is a lucky egg, for it can make him who owns it very rich. There is a magic charm in it. If you owned an egg like this you could eat roast pig and drink wine every day of your life. To be rich, man, do you know how that feels? Well, you'll know it the moment you buy one of these lucky eggs I hold in my bag. Only a dollar, sir, just one dollar (offers egg to him).

John. Nope. I don't care to be rich. I know that one dollar in my pocket is better than ten in yours, and that's all I care for just now.

Gypsy (flatteringly). Don't talk like a sissy.

If you can add one hundred thousand dollars to that one dollar in your pocket in less time than it takes to tell you, if you would spend that one dollar . . . wouldn't you be a dunce if you didn't do it?—(steps up to him). Let me tell your fortune (grabs his hand).

John (pulls his hand back). I can do that myself. You're after that fortune of one dollar in my pocket. Now isn't that so?

Gypsy. No, it isn't. Let me see your palm and I'll tell you if you'll be rich some day and what kind of a wife you'll have (again reaches for his hand).

John (pulls hand back). I don't care to know if I'll be rich or not as long as I know that I am not. And as to my wife, I know more about her than I care to know.

Gypsy. What, are you a married man?

John. Didn't you know that? See, what you know about things you don't know!

Gypsy. I didn't claim that I am all-knowing. I only know the things about you that I read off your hand.

John. Can't you read from my nose? It is right there in my face and visible for everybody.

Gypsy. There's nothing interesting about that canthook of a nose in your face, you smarty. Now what are you doing today? Are you

haying? I can make nice haying weather for you just for a couple dollars. Put 'er there and I'll let you have your choice (extends hand).

John (puts hand to his mouth as tho extracting something from it). Here is my chew (puts his hand in hers). There is more juice in it than in my hand, so you may tell my fortune for it.

Gypsy (throwing thing at his face). Ah, get away, you sheephead.— Now if you don't care for the weather, maybe you've got a sweetheart who doesn't care for you. I can make her love you sincerely and faithfully— for just two measly dollars (extends other hand).

John. Naw, I've got all sorts of girls that love me more'n I care for. I wouldn't spend a nickle for more love.

Gypsy. Well, if that's so, you're an unlucky chap.— Now maybe there is a hidden treasure somewhere in your house or in your field and you don't know it. I can tell you where you can find it for three dollars, that's all.

John. Now you are hitting me, and right hard at that, too. A treasure I have hidden somewhere, but you certainly do not know it.

Gypsy. I bet you I do. Give me three dollars and I'll tell you.

John. You can have the three dollars as soon as you tell me how big a treasure it is.

Gypsy. It is as big as a cow, you silly.

John. Ah, gowan. You don't know beans. You even haven't got the brains of our one-lobed white hen for she knows when it's time to roost. You skidoo now.

Gypsy (threateningly). Say, Mister! . . . You don't know who I am. I am a mighty sorceress and can do very bad things to you if you don't look out (extending hand.) Give me fifty cents and I'll go.

John. Do bad things to me, eh? So can I. I am able to wallup your back with this stick (raises stick) until you don't care for my money any longer. Want me to tell your fortune with this? I'll do it for much less than a dollar, too (threatens to strike her. Gypsy vanishes thru right entrance). There, that fixes her all right. I am sure if Sam, the boss, had been in my place, he would have gulped all she said and given her money besides, for he is covetous of big riches. It's a good thing she is gone (exit left).

Sam (enters, followed by Gertie; Sam holds a swelled stocking in hand, empties it on table and counts coins, adding like to like in piles. While he is doing this, Gypsy puts head in thru left door and watches him).

Sam (counting) nine—ten—twenty—thirty—fifty—hundred—two hundred—three hundred and fifty, it's all here, Gertie. Nice money, fine money, much money, fair money: my money! I won't put it in the bank, for banks fail every other day; I'll put it into my stocking, then I'll know where to get it when I want it.

Gertie. But, Sam, I believe it would be safer to put it in the bank. Some sneak thief may ransack the house while we're away, and all our nice money would be lost.

Sam. Ah no, I'll take good care of it—no thief will ever find it.

Gertie. There is no telling—only last night I dreamt of fire; I saw little flames of red hot fire.

Sam. Where did you see it, in the room or outside the house?

Gertie. No, it was in the basement.

Sam (startled). In the basement, you say? I wouldn't wonder if a treasure is hidden somewhere in the basement, for that is what a dream like that means. In what corner did you notice the fire?

Gertie. I'm not sure about that. That part of my dream is misty.

Sam. Now look what you've done? You might

just as well have seen the very place where to find it. If you're dreaming, why don't you have a decent dream?

Gertie. Do you really believe there is a treasure hidden somewhere?

Sam. Most certainly. For that's what my Dream Book says. Now we don't know where to look for it.

Gertie. I'll find it, Sam, don't you worry. I'll dig for it until I've found it. I think I'll start digging in the pigsty.

Gypsy (draws head back and vanishes).

Sam. Dig in any likely place. And I'll put this bag away and after that shall help you dig (starts putting coins back into bag).

Gertie. Very well. I'll go and get two spades for us (exit right).

Gypsy (enters left, switch in hand, whiningly).
Oh dear! Oh dear! How bad some people will treat a lady! I hope you're not like the rest of them. People are praising you, saying what a gentleman Sam is!

Sam (who has shown fright at her appearance, ties bag). Well, I should say so ... should say so.

Gypsy. And that you're such a very rich man, not knowing how much money you own (at this, Sam pushes stocking into drawer and

protects drawer with his rear), and how lucky you have always been in acquiring money.

Sam. What do you want? Speak it right out. Gypsy (with low voice.) I came here to tell you great news:— there is a treasure hidden in your soil— gold, gold! Red hot gold, and silver snowy white—a lot of it.

Sam (startled). You don't say so. Gold, and silver? A real treasure?

Gypsy. A treasure, I tell you, a treasure as big as there ever has been found ... See, how my switch bends and stirs. A sure indication that there is valuable coin hidden somewhere near us.

Sam (with great agility). Where may it be? where do you suppose it is? I have always thought so, but — — where is it?

Gypsy (draws old book from pocket and turns leaves over). Here is where it says so: a treasure hidden in the time of the Civil war.

Sam. What kind of a book is it? Where did you get it?

Gypsy. Easy. Don't ask too many questions at a time. It is a fortune teller's book fallen from the skies.

Sam. Ah, I see. That's why so many good things are written in it. What does it say about my hidden treasure?

Gypsy (turns leaves). I'll tell you presently..

Here it says, the treasure may be lifted on certain conditions. In the first place a magic charm has to be taken off so nobody gets hurt.

Sam (aghast). Is it dangerous? What is there to be done?

Gypsy. You can't do anything. The charm has to be annulled by a person who knows how. But there is one great obstacle in the way. Your money in that drawer and this treasure won't agree, one will eat the other up if the magic isn't broken in a proper way. A certain sign has to be made on your money stocking so it is safe from destruction.

Sam. If it is that bad I think I'll not lift the treasure.

Gypsy. It is quite easy for the person who knows. Hand me your money stocking from the drawer. I'll make the sign over it and nothing will happen to it.

Sam. Well — s'pose something will happen to the money inside; s'pose it might vanish ...

Gypsy. Goosie. How can it vanish as long as I hold it in my hand? You watch me. Now give me the stocking.

Sam (taking out stocking from drawer and handing it over). There it is, but let me tell you....

Gypsy (taking stocking over, pounds it softly,

presses and feels the contents while talking). Now be very still, don't cough, nor talk, nor spit, nor stir (makes mysterious sign with hand, speaks with low, conjuring voice) Babbara — Dabbara — doolie the foolie — Hunko du punko da baggo di mulie . . . There, that has fixed it. Now put it back into the drawer.

Sam (putting stocking back in drawer). So that makes it safe against the magic charm.

And now, how may I get my treasure?

Gypsy. I'll tell you if you give me half of it.

Sam (scratching back of his ear). Half, did you say? That's too much. I can't do it.

Gypsy. Then promise me one third of it.

Sam. The third part? The whole third part of it? I can't do it. It would make me as poor as a beggar.

Gypsy. All right, I'll believe you. Give me one fourth of it and I'll tell you how to get it.

Sam. I would still be losing money in the transaction. Can't you do it for less?

Gypsy. Not a cent less, you pinch-belly. Promise me, or I'll sink your hidden treasure into the abyss where no man can get it.

Sam (sighingly). Well, if it can't be helped, I'll promise you one fourth of it.

Gypsy. Now listen: there are \$10,000 in that treasure. I'll get \$2500 and your part will amount to \$7500. Now look here (draws from her pocket a porcelain nestegg). This is the egg of a cockatrice, a magic bird laying one egg like this once in hundred years. There is a magic cockerel in it that may be hatched out inside of three hours by a man and a woman sitting alternately on it. But mark you, everybody has to be as quiet as a graveyard while hatching it, always muttering to himself these magic words, Babbara- Dabbara— doolie the foolie—Hunko du Punko da baggo di mulie.— Say it!

Sam. That's easy— Babbara— Dabbara bother the mulie....

Gypsy. Hold on, that's all wrong. You'll spoil the charm by saying it wrong. This way: Babbara — Dabbara-- doolie the foolie — Hunko du Punko da bagga di mulie,

Sam (repeating after her). Dabbara — babbala doodle the poodle....

Gypsy. Wrong again. Both of us will say it together: Babbara — Dabbara — doolie the foolie — Hunko du Punko da baggo di mulie
... Once more (both repeat as above).

Sam. Ha! now I know it, Babbara — Dabbara
....that's it, eh?

Gypsy. Exactly. Now, you'll succeed. After you have sat on the egg for an hour, I'll sit on it for another hour, and then your turn will come again, and the result — a lively cockerel will burst the shell and jump out.

Sam. The dickens, you say. A real cock that scratches and crows?

Gypsy. Just as I say. He will crow and jump three times and with the third jump will hit the exact spot where the treasure is hidden. Then you'll have to jump after him.

Sam (jumps). Like this, I s'pose (jumps away from table).

Gypsy (jumps). No, like this (jumps toward table)

Sam (jumps again farther away table, turning back on Gypsy). Aha, I understand now, it is like this (makes one more jump away).

Gypsy. Exactly. Now you've got it. On the very spot where the rooster crows for the third time you must dig a hole until you find the treasure and you'll be a very rich man.

Sam (triumphantly). I'll be rich—very rich....
Hurry up and let me hatch.

Gypsy. In a moment (builds some kind of a coarse nest in a convenient place where the audience may watch the procedure of hatching and puts egg in). This is the nest.... and

this is the hatching egg. . . Now sit on it and start hatching.

Sam (sitting on nest, awkwardly). Am I sitting right?

Gypsy. Don't press too hard on the egg, but keep it warm and cosy.— There, that'll do. Now look straight in that corner, don't move your eyes in any other direction— don't stir, or something may happen to you. Understand?

Sam (nods). Hmhm.

Gypsy. Now start your charm, Babbara—Dabbara

Sam. Babbara—Dabbara — doolie the foolie — Hunko du Punko da baggo di mulie (repeats continuously in a low, conjuring voice).

Gypsy (takes stocking from drawer while she speaks). Good — very good — excellent — keep it up for an hour — don't look about you, look straight in the corner. I'll leave you for a while but will be back again when your time is up Don't break the egg, you dunce, or you'll never get the treasure (exit left).

Sam (in a low and drawling voice). Babbara — Dabbara (and so forth)
(Pause).

Gertie (enters, looks about). I wonder where

Sam is staying so long. Maybe he is digging somewhere else Why, there he is taking it easy. While I am digging for all I am worth, he is resting. Shame on you, Sam.

Sam. Babbara—Dabbara—doolie the foolie —
Hunko du Punko — da baggo di mulie.

Gertie. What's that? I declare, Sam, you are taking it awful easy.

Sam. Habbara— Babbala — du babble du babble

Gertie. That isn't so, I am not babbling; I've been working hard at digging for the treasure. What's the matter with you? Why don't you get up and be doing?

Sam (vexedly) Babbala—Dabbala— doing and fooling and muling

Gertie (shakes him). Oh the mischief, he has gone crazy . . . My Sammy has gone crazy. The treasure has turned his mind. He is talking foolish things— all out of his senses. Dear me, o dear me . . .

Sam (mad). Dabbara — Babbara — doolie the foolie — (shakes her hand off). Hunko du Punko da baggo di mulie.

Gertie (soothingly). No, Sam, you don't have to beg the mulie cow . . . I know just what you mean. Poor husband! Come, get up,

sit on a chair.... Try to remember where you are..... I'll call the doctor for you.

Sam (enraged, loud). Babbala — babbala — babbala --- dabbala (swings arms about himself, endeavoring to scare her away).

Gertie. Oh, Sam, don't act that way Do you know me? Tell me who I am, can you? Try hard to remember me, will you!

Sam (still louder). Dabbala — babbala — let me alone, will you? — Doolie the foolie — get away — Punko the Hunko — get out of here — foolie the mulie.

Gertie (exitedly). Now you are getting to be real mean, Sam. You are calling me names—I won't stand it. Get up here (kicks at him) you lazy dog... Trying to hit me, are you? Get up and be stirring about (jerks and pulls at his arms) or I'll set my spade working on you.

Sam (roaringly). Babbara — Dabbara— doolie the foolie. Hunko du punch you in the head if you don't go (jumps up and takes attitude of striking her) get — or I'll throw you into the middle of next year, do you hear?

Gertie (screaming) Help — help — he wants to kill me — he is gone real mad — help — help!

Sam (scolding). There, you spoiled everything

—wouldn't listen or take a hint. That's just how you are, always butting into other people's business (points to nest). Don't you see? Don't you understand? I've been hatching the lucky egg. Now the charm is spoiled and the treasure is sunk to regions unknown. Gertie (aghast). He is still wandering in his mind.

Sam. Ah, stop that foolish babble, nobody is wandering altho it would have been great luck if you had wandered, as I motioned you to. No word was I to say, I had to keep mum still— and, there, some evil spirit sends you in here to disturb me.

Gertie. What did I do? nothing. What makes you hatch like an old gander on a porcelain nestegg? What's the idea?

Sam. Wife, can't you comprehend? I was to hatch out the magic rooster which was to show me where the treasure is hidden.... That's what I was doing.

Gertie. And I thought you were to meet me in the pigsty and help me dig for the treasure....

Sam. I was intending to, but the Gypsy who came in here after you left told me all about it and gave me this lucky egg (takes up egg and shows it to her).

Gertie. Why, Sam, that's just a common porcelain nestegg— nothing lucky about that. She has been making a fool of you.

Sam. A fool? (stares at egg and then at her). A fool, you say? Where is that Gypsy woman? where is my money stocking? (pulls out drawer in table). Gone! — Gone! — — No, she is not fooling me; she has foretold just such a thing: as soon as the charm gets spoiled, she says, your money will vanish, and it has vanished (wringing hands above his head) Oh I am ruined, I'm a poor man — a poor sod-clogger once more.

John (enters, remains at entrance).

Gertie. You let her take your money away from you? That's what you did?— That's just like the two-legged ass you are . . .

Sam. You are right this time, I have been an ass — I have always been a donkey. I never again shall hatch out a lucky egg. I'm thru with that foolery.

Gertie. Oh; I see now, that's why you were talking about mules and fools when I came in . . . That's what you meant, haha!

John. Did that Gypsy skin you, Sam? Well, I chased her out here before you came in and believed you were safe; but I see I was mis-

taken. One can never trust a fool. Well, after all, it serves you right.

Sam. Stop kidding me, John. I have paid dearly for the things I do not know, don't you see?

John. True it is, but you'll never get wise, I am afraid.

Sam. I'll show you, John (steps in center of stage). Give me your hand (takes John by the left hand). Right here I will make an everlasting promise (takes Gertie's right hand with his left hand). I promise and intend to keep it that I shall never again dig for a treasure or hatch a lucky egg except by honest labor and wise economy.

Gertie and John (while curtain drops). So be it.

End.

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